

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 ACDA-19 SS-20 NSC-07 DRC-01 OMB-01 /129 W

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R 081700Z MAR 74

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4510

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USNMR SHAPE

CINCLANT

USLOSACLANT

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 1296

E.O. 11652: GDS 12-31-80

TAGS: MCAP, NATO

SUBJECT: NATO FORCE PROPOSALS/GOALS 1975-1980

REF: A. STATE 042348

B. USNATO 1233

SUMMARY: MISSION CIRCULATED WASHINGTON APPROACH TO DETERMINING ESSENTIAL FORCE PROPOSALS WHICH PRESENT "REASONABLE CHALLENGES" FOR ALLIANCE MEMBERS (REF A) TO DRC DELEGATIONS MAR 5. ALLIES HAVE NOT YET DIGESTED US PROPOSED METHODOLOGY AND APPEAR TO BE AWAITING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEIR COUNTRIES BEFORE RESPONDING IN DETAIL. THIS MESSAGE OFFERS MISSION RECOMMENDATION FOR SLIGHT CHANGE IN FUTURE WASHINGTON ANALYSES OF COUNTRY FORCE PROPOSALS.
END SUMMARY.

1. MISSION AGREES THAT FORCE PROPOSALS MUST PRESENT "REASONABLE CHALLENGES" RATHER THAN LENGTHY "WISH LISTS" BEYOND NATIONS' CONFIDENTIAL

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CAPACITIES TO ACCOMPLISH. WASHINGTON METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING ESSENTIAL FRG FORCE PROPOSALS WILL BE USEFUL WHEN EXAMINING FORCE PROPOSALS FOR OTHER ALLIES.

2. HOWEVER, MISSION SUGGESTS SLIGHT MODIFICATION TO FUTURE COUNTRY ANALYSES. WASHINGTON BASES "REASONABLE CHALLENGE" ON BEGIN QUOTE: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TOTAL DEFENSE EXPENDITURES BASED ON MAINTAINING THE CURRENT GNP PERCENTAGE AND TOTAL DEFENSE EXPENDITURES BASED ON CURRENT NATIONAL PLANS END QUOTE (REF A). OPERATIVE ASSUMPTION IS THAT NATO MEMBERS MAINTAIN PAST PERCENTAGES OF GNP EXPENDED ON DEFENSE. PAST PERCENTAGES SHOW SUBSTANTIAL VARIATIONS AMONG ALLIES. CANADA AND DENMARK EXPENDED LESS THAN 3 PERCENT OF THEIR 1973 GNP ON DEFENSE WHILE THE US, UK, GREECE AND PORTUGAL EXCEEDED 5 PERCENT. PROJECTIONS OF THESE SAME PERCENTAGES INTO THE FUTURE AS BASES FOR "REASONABLE CHALLENGES" WOULD APPEAR TO LET CANADA AND DENMARK OFF THE HOOK AND, CONVERSELY, TO ESTABLISH UNACHIEVABLE GOALS FOR OTHERS.

3. AGGREGATE ALLIANCE DEFENSE EXPENDITURE AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL GNP HAS REMAINED AT 4.2-4.3 SINCE 1970. WASHINGTON MIGHT CONSIDER THIS RATIO IN ADDITION TO PAST PERFORMANCES AND ECONOMIC CAPABILITIES WHEN DETERMINING REASONABLE PROJECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES. THIS SUGGESTS POSSIBILITY OF HIGHER PROJECTIONS FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES (E.G. CANADA, DENMARK, BELGIUM). MCAULIFFE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 11 JUN 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATO01296
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS 12-31-80
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: NATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740381/abbrytri.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. STATE 042348
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30-Aug-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATO FORCE PROPOSALS/GOALS 1975-1980
TAGS: MCAP, NATO
To: STATE
SECDEF INFO BONN
USNMR SHAPE
CINCLANT
USLOSACLANT
USCINCEUR
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005